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The Lady of the
Opera House

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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

THE LADY OF THE OPERA HOUSE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY

FANNY CANNON

AUTHOR OF

*"Writing and Selling a Play," "What's in a Name," "The
Love Laggard,"*

CO-AUTHOR

*"The Mark of the Beast," (Produced at the Princess, New York),
"Meow!"*



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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Dedicated to "Billy"

THE LADY OF THE OPERA HOUSE

CHARACTERS.

WILLIAM HOAGLAND (*Billy*).....*An Artist*
JOHN STEBBINS*A Millionaire*
BERTHA RICHARDS (*Dicksie*).....*An Artist*
GLADYS LESLIE

TIME—*The Present.*

PLACE—*New York City.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Thirty Minutes.*



COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

BILLY—A good looking young man of about twenty-five. His clothes show signs of wear. At beginning, wears a long soiled painting apron.

DICKSIE—She is a type of the clever, self-reliant, yet entirely feminine young woman worker of today. She plainly dressed. Costume covered with a long painting apron, cleaner than Billy's, and her sleeves covered with cotton overcuffs.

GLADYS—A handsome woman beautifully dressed. Jewels are at her throat and on her fingers. She carries her gloves. Her face is disguised by a white lace veil of heavy pattern, hanging from her hat.

STEBBINS—Middle-aged, well groomed and well fed.

PROPERTY LIST.

Dented tin tea-kettle of steaming water, canvas on easel, palette, tubes of paint, half—or nearly used, brushes. Chipped cup and saucer—not mates, tea-spoon, battered tea-pot, small package with about a table-spoonful of tea, heel of a loaf of bread—enough for two slices, bread-knife, rumpled paper bag containing about a spoonful of granulated sugar; all for Billy. Fresh, new tube of paint for Dicksie, addressed and stamped envelope containing check, package (square) wrapped to look like a box of berries, package of salt, wrapped in a bag to look like pound of sugar.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of the stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; upstage, away from footlights; downstage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

THE LADY OF THE OPERA HOUSE

SCENE—BILLY's studio. *It is poorly furnished, the only ornaments being a few sketches in oils and charcoal pinned to the walls. A window with practicable sashes is C. in flat. Outside is the railing of a fire-escape. To the R. of the window is a cheap calico curtain, back of which hang his few clothes. To the L. is another curtain, hiding his "kitchen."* (Note: *All that is necessary back of this curtain is a table on which at the last moment a tea-kettle of boiling water is placed. It is used almost at once after the rise of the curtain.*) *At R. is the one entrance. Between it and the foot-lights is a rickety dresser in which BILLY keeps his supplies. On it are one or two cups and saucers, his tea-pot and sundry other dishes somewhat the worse for wear. Against the L. wall is a couch or low sofa. A faded slumber robe is thrown across it, folded up. Down L. C. is an easel. A canvas is on the side of the easel away from the audience. Down R. C. is a kitchen table, with bread-knife, etc.*

At rise BILLY is seated before the easel. At his right is a small stool or old chair without a back, on which are his paints, etc. He has on a large painting apron, much bedaubed. His position places him facing the audience with the easel a little in front of him and turned slightly toward his left side. He is painting feverishly. With a satisfied sigh he sinks back in his chair, looking at his work. Lays down palette and brushes. Shuts his eyes, then passes his hand across his brow, looking around the room as if dizzy and trying to collect himself. Then—

BILLY.

(With a half laugh at his own stupidity.)

Guess I'm hungry. That's what's the matter.

(Gets up, takes off apron, which he throws across chair. Goes over to the dresser and begins poking around for something to eat. Takes down an old cup and saucer, not mates, gets his tea-pot. Starts looking for tea. Finds a packet with very little in it, carefully measures out a teaspoonful, puts it in the pot. Inserts a dingy strainer in the spout. Whistling under his breath, he disappears behind curtain up L. and reappears with a dented tin tea-kettle with boiling water in it. He stops as he passes the painting, starts to fix something on it, remembers the tea-kettle and continues on down to the table. Pours water into the tea-pot and puts the kettle down.) Now for some bread and butter. (He goes to the dresser. Finds only the heel of a loaf of bread—just about two slices. He looks at it disconsolately, then, starting to whistle again, takes the bread knife with a flourish and triumphantly divides the bread into two slices. Puts them on the saucer of his cup.) Now the butter. (Goes up to the window, lifts the sash, puts his hand out and brings it in empty. Puts the window down slowly.) No butter. Must have eaten that yesterday. (Back to the table. Pours the tea into his cup. Gets a rumpled bag from the dresser. Squints into it, then shakes it out over the cup to extract the last grain of sugar. Stirrs his tea. Comes back to the painting with cup and slices of bread. Sits down at the easel, takes a sip of tea, looking at the painting. Takes up a brush and makes a touch at the canvas, then lays it down to sip and munch, puts cup down on chair beside him, and with a slice of bread in his left hand, bites at it while making some few strokes on the painting. A knock at the door. He speaks with his mouth full.) Come in.

Enter DICKSIE. She is plainly dressed, her costume covered with a long painting apron, cleaner than BILLY'S, and her sleeves covered with cotton over-cuffs. She is a type of the clever, self-reliant, yet entirely feminine young woman worker of today. BILLY does not turn around but keeps on with his work.

DICKSIE.

(As she opens the door.)

Greetings!

BILLY.

(Over his shoulder, in a genial tone, not turning around.)

Hello, Dicksie. Come in—come in.

DICKSIE.

(Coming in, closing the door behind her, speaking as she does so.)

I've brought back that tube of yellow ochre you lent me yesterday. *(Holds out a full, fresh tube of paint.)*

BILLY.

(Turning and looking at it.)

But, my dear girl, that's new. The one I lent you was nearly empty.

DICKSIE.

Nearly empty! It was nearly full and I used about all of it. *(Lays the tube down on his stool, laughing.)* You are a good business man, aren't you?

BILLY.

(Smiles, then looks at his painting.)

How d'you like it?

DICKSIE.

(Coming up behind him, looking over his shoulder.)

So you've finished your Madonna. *(She studies it for a second.)* It's good, Billy; good. And the face—I think it's the loveliest I ever saw. It fairly radiates sweetness and goodness.

BILLY.

You like it, then? I'd rather have your good opinion than 'most anybody's.

DICKSIE.

(Turns away—a little bitterly.)

I wonder why. I'm only a tuppenny illustrator. I had to swallow my ambitions when the wolf knocked at the door. Wish I'd had your courage to stick it out.

BILLY.

Don't talk that way. You're clever—and—

DICKSIE.

Never mind. I don't want to talk about me. 'What have you had for lunch? (*Sees the remains of his scant eating. BILLY looks sheepish.*) Billy Hoagland! I'm ashamed of you. Go out and get something to eat this minute!

BILLY.

Why should I? I'm not hungry. (*With a melodramatic wave of his hand.*) I've dined on a divine afflatus—

DICKSIE.

Divine fiddlesticks! You need a beefsteak—and some boiled potatoes with—

BILLY.

(*Grandiloquently.*)

Out, material female! Why, if I filled up—

DICKSIE.

(*With a short laugh.*)

Filled up! Yes, you're likely to.

BILLY.

(*With pretended sternness.*)

Don't interrupt—it isn't polite. I said if I filled up on such unwieldy stuff as steak, and potatoes, and eggs, and—and—strawberries—

DICKSIE.

(*Quickly, with sudden recollection.*)

You do like strawberries, don't you?

BILLY.

(*Waving the speech aside.*)

I'd be good for nothing. You see, I know myself. (*With a majestic flourish.*) I'm an artist, not a glutton!

DICKSIE.

(Examining the remains of his lunch.)

Well, Mr. Artist, I should say it would need seven-league boots to travel from dry bread and tea to gluttony—and strawberries. *(Turning away from him and walking a little right.)* Some journey, believe me!

BILLY.

(With a boyish change from his theatrical manner.)

What—what did you say about strawberries?

DICKSIE.

I said you liked 'em.

BILLY.

(Enthusiastically, getting up and standing back from his painting.)

You bet I do! Some day *(coming center)* I'm going to buy a whole crate, and two pounds of powdered sugar—and *(ending with a triumphant flourish)* eat 'em all myself—everyone of 'em!

DICKSIE.

(Falling into his mood and pretending to wheedle.)

Oh, Billy, won't you give me just a teeny, weeny one?

BILLY.

(Positively.)

No, madam, not one. *(He has moved back and is looking at the picture.)*

DICKSIE.

Then I hope they make you sick.

BILLY.

Cat! Well, I tell you what I'll do. When I get that crate of strawberries—

DICKSIE.

Yes. When—

BILLY.

If you do something for me now—

DICKSIE.

You'll give me *one*? Many thanks, kind sir. (*Laughing.*) What do you want me to do?

BILLY.

(*Ingratiatingly.*)

Just once more. I want to get the light on that hand. Do you mind?

DICKSIE.

Not a bit. Shall I stand here? (*She takes her position about right-center of the stage, holding her left hand posed against her breast as if holding together some piece of drapery.*)

BILLY.

That's it. How quickly you get into the pose. (*He begins to work rapidly, looking from painting to hand, and so on.*)

DICKSIE.

It's only the hand you want?

BILLY.

Yep. Just a few strokes.

DICKSIE.

(*Smiling at him.*)

Just like that.

(*There is a brief pause as he works. Suddenly he turns and looks at her.*)

BILLY.

(*Abruptly.*)

I don't know, but sometimes you make me so mad I can't see straight.

DICKSIE.

(*With a surprised laugh.*)

Why?

BILLY.

I don't know, but you do. You know, this isn't you I'm painting.

DICKSIE.

(*Still smiling.*)

Who said it was?

BILLY.

Well, it isn't. It's—well, it isn't you. (DICKSIE *smiles quietly. He works a second, then suddenly.*) But, honest injun, girl, I don't know what I should have done without you. (*He goes on painting.*)

DICKSIE.

Models *are* a bit of a nuisance—and expensive.

BILLY.

Yes. (*He works as he talks.*) And they insist on talking such idiotic drivel.

DICKSIE.

(*Teasing.*)

Do I talk drivel?

BILLY.

No! Besides, you're not a model—you're just a pal, and a mighty good one, too.

DICKSIE.

Well, if it isn't my talk that makes you angry, what is it?

BILLY.

I don't know—it's the way you look, I guess. Every time you leave here, I begin to fight *inside* myself. I don't know why, but I do.

DICKSIE.

What an uncomfortable feeling.

BILLY.

Oh, it's not *your* fault. You're too comfortable to have around to make me feel otherwise.

DICKSIE.

(*Teasingly, as if she thought she knew the reason for these conflicting feelings.*)

How do you ever straighten out the many ways I make you feel—I should think it would make you dizzy.

BILLY.

(With a grin.)

Sometimes it does.

DICKSIE.

(Happily.)

Really?

BILLY.

(Nodding.)

Hm-m. Just another minute, and I've finished.

DICKSIE.

(Making up her mind to ask the question.)

Billy!

BILLY.

(Painting.)

Yes?

DICKSIE.

You know, you promised to tell me how you came to start that picture. Can't you tell me now, while I'm standing here? I'm in a listening mood.

BILLY.

Good! That doesn't happen often.

DICKSIE.

(Smiling.)

Now, don't be impertinent.

BILLY.

(Laughs.)

Well, I'll tell it to you—but, you know, I don't think I'd know how to tell it to anybody else—because it's—*(takes a fresh start, speaking more easily as he swings into the story)*. One night—last winter—I was caught in a sudden rainstorm on Broadway and stopped under

the portico of the Metropolitan Opera House. The audience was coming out and there was such a crowd that I was forced to stand near the curb. A woman came out and hurried to a big automobile. She made my heart jump, I can tell you—(*he has forgotten DICKSIE for a moment. She contracts her brows as if with pain at the sudden forced change in her thought*) because I thought—I thought she paused for a moment and looked into my face. And her eyes were sorrowful. She was a vision under the lights. But it wasn't that. You see, she was like—strangely like—some one I—for whom I—care very much. (*There is a pause. He covers his eyes with his left hand.*)

DICKSIE.

(*Shows the stab she has received as she speaks with difficulty.*)

Someone you loved?

BILLY.

(*Too engrossed in his memories to notice her tone.*)

Yes.

DICKSIE.

(*Softly, painfully.*)

So that is why—you've never married. I've wondered, sometimes. You seem the sort of a man who would—who ought to—

BILLY.

(*Half bitterly, looking around his room.*)

Marry! Why? What have I to offer a woman? (*DICKSIE starts to interrupt. He looks at the picture.*) She was beautiful and good. But how could *she* stand such a life? It was not fair to ask it.

DICKSIE.

(*Hiding from him a sadly contemptuous little smile.*)

If she had loved you, Billy—

BILLY.

(*Winces, but speaks bravely, loyally.*)

She was all right. (*He makes a stroke with his brush on the canvas. DICKSIE closes her eyes as if in pain.*)

DICKSIE.

(*Painfully.*)

Where is she?

BILLY.

She is a governess in a small place on Long Island. I don't think she gets much of a salary—but there she is, slaving and waiting for me. I hate to think of her struggling along, and yet—you can't think what an inspiration it is to know she *is* waiting for me. You see, *she* believes in me.

DICKSIE.

(*Interrupting softly.*)

Aren't there others who believe in you?

BILLY.

(*Unconscious of hurting her.*)

But it's such a difference—others believing and her belief. (*DICKSIE winces.*) Just believing in you is one thing. But *she* works, and waits, and *loves*! That's what makes all the difference. That's what the others don't give.

DICKSIE.

They—they don't?

BILLY.

No. They just tell you they like your work, and that some day you'll do something big, and—and then they ask if it doesn't cramp your thumb to hold the palette that way. (*DICKSIE starts to speak, but BILLY continues. He finishes his work, laying down brushes, etc. DICKSIE begins to move about the room, half mechanically straightening things, always keeping her face turned from him.*) I wrote to her about seeing this woman at the

Opera House. She wrote me such a wonderful letter about it, and this picture, and then she pretended to be jealous. Why, jealousy is impossible—we *love* each other!

DICKSIE.

(*Half whispers as she shifts some things on the dresser.*)

Yes.

BILLY.

You see, I haven't seen her in a year and a half. She can't come here, and she won't let me come to her—for fear of her people there not liking it, you know. I just write to her—general delivery—(*more happily*). But—if I sell this—I'm to see her when I sell my first big painting—maybe this is it—and *that* will be our formal engagement.

DICKSIE.

(*Under her breath.*)

Your engagement!

BILLY.

(*His happiness at the idea makes him blind to everything else.*)

Yes—oh, it'll be very formal, sort of a—Thanksgiving meeting, you know. I'm going to kneel, like this (*he gets down on one knee*), take her hand, make a bee-yoo-tiful speech in words of five syllables each—(*getting up and laughing at his own nonsense*) and then I'm going to—(*a postman's whistle is heard and a distant bell.*)

DICKSIE.

(*Glad of a relief in the tension.*)

There's a letter for me—the bell rang in my rooms. (*She exits hastily, closing the door after her.* BILLY takes his painting apron and hangs it up on a hook back of the calico curtain.)

VOICE.

(*Outside. Negro dialect.*)

Mr. Hoagland!

BILLY.

(*Calling.*)

Yes, Joe.

VOICE.

Gemmen down here—wants to see you.

BILLY.

(*In consternation.*)

It's the rent. (*Raising his voice.*) All right, Joe; I'm coming. (*He dashes out, leaving the door open.*)

DICKSIE.

(*After brief pause, calling from across the hall.*)

Billy! O-oh, Billy! (*She comes in quickly with a letter in her hand, looks around.*) Why, where can he have gone? Billy! (*Turns to leave hurriedly.*)

DICKSIE collides with GLADYS LESLIE, who enters. GLADYS is a handsome woman, beautifully dressed. Jewels are at her throat and on her fingers. She carries her gloves. Her face is disguised by a white lace veil of heavy pattern, hanging from her hat.

GLADYS.

I'm looking for Mr. Hoagland's apartment. William Hoagland. I was directed here.

DICKSIE.

Yes, this is right. He lives here.

GLADYS.

Is he at home.

DICKSIE.

I think so—he *was*, a little while ago. I wanted—to show him an important letter—the door was open, but he seems to have left—I suppose only for a few minutes.

GLADYS.

(*Studying DICKSIE through her veil.*)

Oh, I see. I must have missed him in the hall.

DICKSIE.

There's a back stairway. He must have used that.

GLADYS.

(*Meaningly.*)

Are you *Mrs. Hoagland*?

DICKSIE.

(*Uncomfortably.*)

No; I'm just another artist, like himself—that is—*(laughing a little)* I'm *not* like him—I only do illustrating—my workshop is across the hall. *(She starts to go.)*

GLADYS.

(*Whose curiosity is aroused.*)

Don't go, please. Tell me something of Mr. Hoagland. Is he well?

DICKSIE.

I believe so. You know him?

GLADYS.

Yes—that is—I used to know him. He paints rather well, doesn't he?

DICKSIE.

Yes, indeed. That's his latest work. *(Points to the easel.)*

GLADYS.

(*Going to it.*)

So *this* is it!

DICKSIE.

(*Startled.*)

Why? Had you heard of it?

GLADYS.

Yes—that is—yes, I heard of it—recently—from friends.

DICKSIE.

(Pleased.)

Oh—then they told you at Arnot's.

GLADYS.

Arnot? I don't think I've heard of him.

DICKSIE.

(Disappointed.)

Oh, I thought—he's the big art dealer, you know.

GLADYS.

Oh, yes; I remember. *(She studies the painting.)*

DICKSIE.

(Referring to the picture.)

Isn't it wonderful? Yesterday I had Arnot's big man here—Mr. Caldwell himself—when Mr. Hoagland was out, and he said so. He told me to be sure and let him know when it was finished. But see *(holding up letter)*, he evidently was afraid to wait, because today he's mailed me a check to pay for it.

GLADYS.

(Suspiciously.)

Why should he send Mr. Hoagland's checks to you?

DICKSIE.

(On guard, straightening up.)

He had some other matter of business to arrange with me—it may have been unbusinesslike—but he's never met Mr. Hoagland, and he was writing to me anyway—so he probably looked on me as the agent selling the picture—I suppose that was it. *(She haughtily lays the letter on table right.)*

GLADYS.

(Looking again at the picture.)

We—that is, I'm thinking of buying it myself.

DICKSIE.

Oh, if it's bought, I don't suppose it matters who buys it—if your husband is interested—

GLADYS.

(Surprised.)

My husband! *(Recovering herself.)* Oh, yes—my husband will like it—if I say it's good. *(She lifts the veil to look at the picture more easily.)*

DICKSIE.

(Looks at her keenly, then, startled, exclaims.)

Oh—why—you're the original—his Lady of the Opera House!

GLADYS.

(Equally startled, turns quickly.)

What! The Opera House! Why—I—

DICKSIE.

Oh, of course you wouldn't know—he saw you—one night—then started to paint this.

GLADYS.

(Recovering herself.)

Oh, yes, I remember—I saw him on the pavement. *(Bites her lip in annoyance at her slip.)*

DICKSIE.

Why, did you know him? I didn't imagine—he didn't know you.

GLADYS.

(Annoyed.)

No, no; of course not.

DICKSIE.

(Persisting.)

But then, you said, when you first came in, that you did know him—

GLADYS.

(Trying to cover up her mistake and lying.)

Yes, in a way. It was sometime ago. But when he painted this he wrote me telling me of it and suggesting that—we—I might be interested and wish to buy it.

DICKSIE.

(Puzzled.)

He wrote—to you—to buy it! I don't understand. He did not know the woman he saw at the Opera House—how could he—

GLADYS.

(Sharply.)

I don't know that it's any of your business. What right have you to question me or my being here?

DICKSIE.

No, of course not. It seemed strange, that's all—because he wrote—

GLADYS.

(More sharply.)

Never mind. My business is with Billy—Mr. Hoagland—not with you. *(She turns back to the painting.)*

DICKSIE.

(A light dawning on her. Half to herself.)

Billy!

GLADYS.

(Turns.)

What?

DICKSIE.

(Slowly.)

Nothing—I was think—*(suddenly, because she knows the truth)* you may be able to induce him to sell—but there is still—*(she stops and listens)* Wait. I think I hear someone coming up. I'll leave you to talk to him. *(Turns to leave hurriedly.)*

DICKSIE runs into JOHN STEBBINS, who enters. He is well groomed, well fed, self-satisfied, middle-aged.

DICKSIE.

Oh, I beg your pardon.

STEBBINS.

(With an appraising look at her.)

Don't mention it. (Looking past her at the painting.)
Picture of you?

DICKSIE.

(Startled, looks back at the painting.)

Of me? Oh, no!

STEBBINS.

No? It's got your eyes, all right.

GLADYS.

(Sharply.)

John! (DICKSIE exits hurriedly.) Was it necessary for you to come up. I thought we decided—

STEBBINS.

(Looking at the picture.)

Yep. It's got her eyes, sure thing!

GLADYS.

(Still more sharply.)

Whose? That's the picture we came to look at. It's meant to be me!

STEBBINS.

(Surprised.)

So it is! Gee! That's funny.

GLADYS..

(Looking searchingly at the painting.)

And they're not her eyes either.

STEBBINS.

Ain't they?

GLADYS.

No. He meant it for me. He said so.

STEBBINS.

Oh, if he *said* so, he ought to know.

GLADYS.

(*Looking at it again, with a long breath.*)

It's beautiful! I think—I used to look like that.

STEBBINS.

Gee! There's vanity for you. How do you know? Artists always idealize, don't they? Something lacking in it, though. I know—it's those damn loose clothes like a lot of rags. I'll get him to change it.

GLADYS.

(*Sharply.*)

Change it. What for?

STEBBINS.

Because the clothes ain't pretty. It's my money, ain't it, and I'm gonner buy it, ain't I?

GLADYS.

What are you going to offer him?

STEBBINS.

Well, by the looks of things around here, I should think he'd accept almost anything.

GLADYS.

(*Snappishly.*)

That's like you! You'll pay him what it's worth—not a penny less. You're buying a picture, not giving charity.

STEBBINS.

You can pay what you like. I won't give a cent over fifty dollars.

GLADYS.

(Contemptuously.)

Fifty dollars!

STEBBINS.

Just that. Anything over—well, you can deprive yourself. It comes out of your allowance. You can do as you like. *(He turns angrily to leave and runs into BILLY in the doorway. STEBBINS glares at him, then turns to GLADYS.)* I'll leave your car waiting for you. I'm gonner walk home. *(Exits angrily.)*

At BILLY'S entrance GLADYS drops her veil so that it conceals the side of her face toward BILLY. She turns her back to him and gazes as if absorbed at the painting. BILLY looks after STEBBINS in amazement, then turns center. Sees GLADYS.

BILLY.

(Startled.)

Oh—I—didn't know there was anyone here.

GLADYS.

(Not turning, speaking with slightly muffled voice.)

I came to look at—the painting. I had thought of buying it.

BILLY.

(Pleased surprise.)

You had heard of it, then?

GLADYS.

(Hesitatingly.)

Yes. You see—I—was the woman you saw—in front of the Opera House.

BILLY.

(Amazed.)

You! How wonderful!

GLADYS.

(Softly.)

Do you think so?

BILLY.

(Not heeding.)

But it is even more wonderful—that you should have known of me—and the painting—it's very strange—*(with a half laugh)* like magic.

GLADYS.

(Still not letting him see her face.)

Yes.

BILLY.

Yes—because, you see—I never *told* it to but one person, and that was today, not three minutes before you came—to a girl who is an artist, too—across the hall. *(GLADYS looks at him sharply, then turns back to the picture again.)* So you see how startling it is. Though I did *write* it—to someone—but *she* wouldn't tell.

GLADYS.

(Careful to hide her face.)

No?

BILLY.

She is the *real* original of that picture.

GLADYS.

Oh!

BILLY.

(As he gets interested in his story he almost forgets his company.)

Yes. You looked like *her* that night—and it gave me my inspiration. Selling this picture will mean so much. You see, we couldn't afford to marry, because—well, she thought it best. It's been so long—I'm getting hungry for a sight of her, and *now*—it's wonderful to think of her, waiting for me, because she's so—different. *(GLADYS, deeply moved, turns toward the window and stands with her back to the room. BILLY crosses to the picture.)* How I wished, as I saw you in the rain that

night, that I could see *her* dressed like that—and happy! (*He holds out his arms to the painting, then lets them drop.*)

GLADYS.

(*Unable to endure any more, her voice breaking.*)
Would you—would you?

BILLY.

(*Turns quickly, then stands stunned as he recognizes her.*)

Gladys! (*Joyously he holds out his arms. As she comes to him he holds her close. Then, drawing back a little, takes her face between his hands.*) My darling!

GLADYS.

(*Her arms around his neck.*)

Billy! Billy-boy!

BILLY.

(*Drawing her back into his arms and laughing happily.*)

So you were jealous after all. Or are you just curious to see your picture—or me?

GLADYS.

Perhaps it was all three.

BILLY.

(*Giving her a hug.*)

It's good to have you here—it's been a long wait—

GLADYS.

I know.

BILLY.

But here you are—in my studio at last! (*He releases her to take both her hands with both of his, swinging them as children do. He looks only into her face, not at her dress or jewels.*) Oh, it's almost too good to be true!

GLADYS.

(Laughing.)

Oh, no ; I'm flesh and blood. See? Feel! *(She shakes the hands she holds.)* I'm quite alive, I assure you. *(She speaks happily, a little excited.)* And I'm glad I am—glad to be here—with this *(still holding his left hand, she crosses in front of him to the easel, dropping it as she faces the picture with her back to him, instantly putting her right hand behind her to take his hand again.)* It's so splendid, so big, so worth while. *(With the removal of his eyes from her face, BILLY has opportunity to remember things, her general appearance, etc. As she goes on speaking, the joy goes from his manner, the light from his eyes. He grows tense, rigid.)* Billy-boy! What a wonderful piece of work you've done! And to think that you *have* done it! I always knew you could ; I knew it wouldn't be long. *(His silence, his lack of response, make her turn.)* Why, Billy!

BILLY.

(Faces her tensely, obviously trying to control his rising excitement, gazing in accusing horror, first at her jewels, which she instinctively tries to cover with her hands, and then at her costume, while she waits terrified at his meaning. He speaks in a low, tense tone as he points to the door.)

Who is that man?

GLADYS.

(Startled.)

Wh-what?

BILLY.

Who is that man? I found you here with him.

GLADYS.

(A little frightened and trying to soothe him.)
Why, Billy, I never saw you quite like this be—

BILLY.

That man! You were—with *him*! He said—(*he almost chokes*) he said he'd leave your car waiting. *Your* car! On the salary of a governess! A governess! And I believed you! (*His tone is heart-broken.*) I believed you!

GLADYS.

Billy-boy!

BILLY.

(*Outraged.*)

Don't! Don't call me that! That was *her* name for me—the woman I loved—who was waiting—and—then—it was not for me—but for him—in her automobile. (*With a sudden movement he seizes her left hand, almost roughly, and searches among its many rings. Then, with an equally quick gesture, throws the hand from him in disgust.*) Where's your wedding ring? Why don't you wear it? Or have you ever had one?

GLADYS.

(*Shrinking back.*)

I—

BILLY.

Gladys! You! (*He sinks into the chair right, putting his hands to his head as if it ached.*)

GLADYS.

(*With a touch of real sympathy holds out her hand as if to touch him, then lets it drop.*)

Won't you—

BILLY.

(*Lifts his face as the next idea comes to him, then rises.*)

And that night—that night last winter—in front of the Opera House—that *was* you—yourself—no chance resemblance! And that was months ago! My God! My God! (*He half staggers and leans against the table right.*)

GLADYS.

(*Trying to calm him, moves nearer.*)

But Billy—

BILLY.

(*Facing her, holding out his left arm accusingly, pointing at her gown, her jewels.*)

And those—and those—where did you get them? Where? Answer me!

GLADYS.

Billy—please—

BILLY.

On the income of a governess! Did you think you could make me believe that, as I believed the rest? Did you? What was it all for? Why were you doing it? Why did you keep on with me? Why?

GLADYS.

I loved you, and—

BILLY.

(*With stinging scorn.*)

Loved *me*! Is that what you're trying to say? Don't lie. (GLADYS *shrinks from his fierceness.*) It's too late for that now. You never knew what the word meant. And I thought—I hoped—(*he breaks down*). How could you do it? How could you? And I thought so often of the day when you could come here—never doubting—never dreaming—and then you came—like this. Why—why did you come?

GLADYS.

Because I wanted to help—

BILLY.

(*A bitter laugh.*)

You wanted to *help*—when you were the dream of my life—all my hopes—why didn't you stay a dream? But—now—

GLADYS.

I'm sorry—

BILLY.

Sorry! And what do you think you've done to me? Oh, what a fool I've been—what a fool! Living on your letters—(*his thoughts take another turn, his tone changes*) General delivery! No wonder! And I wasn't to come to you because the people you were with might misunderstand, and your reputation suffer! Your reputation! God! And you were waiting and working—and *working*—for me! For *me*! Isn't it funny? Isn't it? Why don't you laugh? Or have you *been* laughing all the time—at me? Laughing in your sleeves at the fool who believed in you, and was hoping and waiting. What a joke it must have seemed—that letter I wrote about the Opera House, and the woman I saw—when you knew—all the time you knew—(*he breaks down for an instant*).

GLADYS.

(*Taking advantage of the pause.*)

Ah, if you knew how that letter hurt me! I recognized you that night—I wanted to speak, but I couldn't. I wrote—you remember?

BILLY.

Oh, I remember. I wonder that you want me to. I was to think of you always as you used to be. You were jealous of the woman in her beautiful clothes! You! Jealous! (*A short laugh, then changing to sternness.*) And you dared to come here, with your—(*he chokes*) to buy it—the picture! The picture! (*Wildly.*) That's the biggest joke of all! Look at it! Look at it! It's like you, isn't it? (*Terrified at his manner, GLADYS gives a frightened look at the easel.*) Like you! That's a libel! (*He moves quickly toward it. GLADYS fears he is coming toward her and shrinks back.*)

GLADYS.

(*Frightened.*)

Billy!

BILLY.

(With a scornful laugh.)

Don't be afraid! You're not worth the effort! *(With increasing bitterness.)* I'm not sure I can't find it in my heart to be sorry for that other poor idiot you're fooling and tricking—as you tricked me! You brought him here—to spend *his* money—on me! God! What are you? Haven't you even a shred of ordinary decency? Isn't it in you to see *what* you've done—or did you expect to fool us both in the end?

GLADYS.

(Knowing her life is safe, shows in her true colors. She comes down between BILLY and the door, her voice rising shrewishly.)

How dare you! How dare you talk to me like that? What right have you to expect to hold a woman? You! You never earned a dollar and you never will! And you talk to me as if I were dirt! Well, I'm not. And to wait for you, with your dreams, and your paints, and this—*(With a comprehensive gesture of disdain around the room.)* Well, no man has a right to ask it—or be disappointed when he doesn't get it.

BILLY.

(Controlling himself with an effort.)

Will—you—please—go!

GLADYS.

(During this speech sees the envelope on the table and picks it up.)

No. I won't till I've had my say. Who are you, to sit in judgment, anyway—you, with your garret—and your morals—*(she reads the address sneeringly)* Miss Bertha Richards! The girl across the hall, to whom you tell your secrets. *(She comes forward with it still in her hand. As she snaps it, a check slips out. She stoops and picks*

it up so that it can be plainly seen, then slips it back into the envelope.)

DICKSIE enters with two small bundles. She has taken off her apron. The others do not see her. She pauses at right of GLADYS, then crosses to the window, back, and waits, placing her packages there.

BILLY.

(His nerves at the breaking point, though still under control.)

Will you please go!

GLADYS.

(More shrewishly, flicking the envelope.)

Your morals! Ha! Well, she won't let you starve, anyway! *(She tosses it toward him so that it falls about center.)*

BILLY.

(Furious.)

Go! Go! Will you go—at once? *(Covering his eyes, he turns from her so that he is facing the picture.)*

GLADYS.

(A little alarmed at the storm she has raised, turns toward the door, speaking over her shoulder.)

All right. No need to get excited. Perhaps it's just as well we found each other out.

BILLY.

(At her last words he has uncovered his eyes and looks at the painting.)

My Madonna! *(The thought seems to rouse him to fury.)* And you! You—! The original, the inspiration for my painting! *(With a bitter laugh, his arms lifted high above his head.)* My God! *(Beside himself.)* No! No! It's a crime! *(He turns swiftly, moving very quickly to the table, whence he picks up the bread-knife.)* It's a crime! It's a crime! *(With the uncertainty of his intention, GLADYS shrinks back terrified, backing out of*

the door, with a little cry of fear, her eyes fixed on his movements. *Exits.* DICKSIE puts out her hand as if in fear of what he means to do, to stop him. With GLADYS' exit he turns to the painting. As he lifts his arm to slash it, DICKSIE comes quickly down to his right.)

DICKSIE.

(*With sharp insistence.*)

Billy!

BILLY.

(*Startled, turns.*)

Dicksie!

DICKSIE.

Are you mad? That picture is sold—you have no right—

BILLY.

Sold! (*He drops the knife.*)

DICKSIE.

(*Stooping and picking up the envelope, she quickly extracts the check.*)

It's payable to you.

BILLY.

(*Taking it, reads it.*)

Fifteen hundred! (*He passes his hand over his forehead, too bewildered in his condition to fully understand.*)

DICKSIE.

(*Laying her hand on his arm, speaking gently.*)

I had Arnot's man, Caldwell, here yesterday—this was to be a surprise. Billy, dear, don't you see, it's your beginning?

BILLY.

(*Still trying to grasp the idea.*)

Sold! Fifteen hundred dollars! (*He turns his eyes from DICKSIE to the painting. The sight of it reminds him.*) Never! It's a sacrilege—my Madonna and that

woman's face—I'd rather starve! (*He clutches at the check as if to tear it.*)

DICKSIE.

(*Laying her hand on his to stop him.*)

Billy! Look at it carefully. Are you—so sure? Does it really look like her?

BILLY.

Why, it was her face gave me the inspiration. The sorrow in her eyes when she half turned to me that night—the—

DICKSIE.

(*Insisting.*)

But does it look like her? (*BILLY goes to the easel. Knowing what the moment means to her, DICKSIE unconsciously lays her hand on her breast, in the pose she used earlier in the act, and stands waiting.*)

BILLY.

Why, of course, it's she—she looked—(*he starts, looks more closely at the picture.*) Why, look! Look! It isn't! That painting doesn't look like her, with her hard face and painted lips! (*He turns to DICKSIE, pointing out through the door as he does so, when he notes her pose. He drops his arm with a sudden thought, gazes at her intently, then back at the picture, his astonishment growing into pleasure.*) Look, Dicksie, look! Look at the hand, the eyes—they're yours—and the soul shining through! It's yours, girl, yours! I've been painting you, you all the time. Oh, what a fool I've been! (*He speaks more softly, wonder and joy at the situation making his voice very tender.*) No wonder I fought inside myself when you were gone! It was the truth I was fighting and I didn't know it. I couldn't see it. But now—I know—I know! (*DICKSIE's emotion is apparent. On the verge of happy tears, she turns to the window where she has put the packages. BILLY watches her as he slips the check into his pocket.*) I love you! I've

been painting you! (*His voice breaks as with the packages she turns to him.*) My Madonna! Why, you—you've given me everything, dear, everything. Sympathy, help, inspiration—

DICKSIE.

(*Between sobs and laughter.*)

And now—now I'm going to give you your strawberries. (*Hands one package.*)

BILLY.

Dicksie! (*As he takes her quickly in his arms, holding the berries in his left hand, the other package she holds burst and powdered sugar* pours to the floor.*)

DICKSIE.

(*With pretended reproach.*)

Billy!

BILLY.

(*As he laughs happily.*)

And powdered sugar! (*Both get to their knees in a frantic, childish effort to save some of the sugar.*)

CURTAIN.

* Salt will be best to use; it's cheaper and heavier.

Macbeth à la Mode

By WALTER BEN HARE.

Price, 25 Cents

School burletta in 3 acts; 7 males, 7 females, also teachers, students, etc., with only a few lines. Time, 1¼ hours. No scenery required, merely a front curtain and an easel with placards announcing scenes. Plot: Willie Macbeth is the social leader of the Senior Class. With his friend Banquo he encounters Three Witches, who prophecy that he will pass his examinations, be elected to a class office and will play on the football team. The first two prophecies come true and in Act II, Lady Macbeth, his mother, arranges for him to play on the football team, by drugging the captain. Macbeth flies to the witches for further advice and learns that he will make a touchdown. He does, but runs with the ball toward the enemy's goal, thus losing the game for his own team. Contains five songs: "Fairwell, My Fairy Fay," "Tact," "The Senior Class," "Music and Laughter" and "Good Night," all sung to college airs. This play is very humorous and particularly adapted for schools.

THE WITCHES' CHANT

Round about the cauldron go;
Mathematics you must know.
Let X equal the cold stone,
When will Y be thirty-one?
Drop that in the mystic pan;
Tell me, pray, how old is Ann?
Double, double, boil and bubble,
Mathematics makes them trouble.

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Biology makes 'em cut and jab.
Thirteen hours a week in lab.
Latin, Greek and German, too,
Fifty pages make a stew.

And to thicken up the mystery.
Take two chapters English History.

Physics, French and English Lit,

Spend an hour on each or git.
All night long from six to three,
Study math and chemistry.
In the hours when you should dream,
Write an English twelve-page theme.

Work at night and Sunday, too.
Outside reading you must do.

Next day, when you're on the bunk,
Teacher springs exam—you flunk.

Double, double, boil and bubble,
High school life is full of trouble.
Cool it with a Freshman's blood,
Then the charm is thick and good.

By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes.

Reminiscences of the Donation Party

By JESSIE A. KELLEY.

Price, 25 Cents

The soliloquy of a minister's wife, with tableaux. For 40 or more characters, both sexes, although the number is optional and it can be presented with a smaller cast. Time, about 35 minutes. The wife at the side of the stage recounts the many amusing incidents of the party, tells who attended and what they brought, etc. The characters appear in pantomime. This entertainment is unique. It fills the demand for something that can be put on "at the last moment." It eliminates the usual long preparations required in producing a play; no parts to memorize and it can be played on any platform. Highly humorous, replete with local hits and strongly recommended for church societies.

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers
154 W. Randolph Street, CHICAGO

The Thread of Destiny

By LINDSEY BARBEE.

Price, 25 Cents

Comedy-drama of the Civil War in 3 acts; 9 males, 16 females. Time, 2½ hours. Scenes: 1 interior, 2 exteriors. Characters: Peyton Bailey, of the U. S. army. Beverly Montgomery, a confederate scout. Colonel Montgomery, a gentleman of the old school. Tom Randolph, a Southern gallant. John Morton, of the North. Ralph, who did not go to war. George and Uncle Billy, slaves. A Union Scout. Virginia, the toast of the country. Betty, the "Little Colonel." Edith, a northern cousin. Louise, a spy. Eight charming southern girls. Mrs. Montgomery. Miss Melissy, of inquisitive nature. Fanny and Mammy, slaves.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Betty breaks a looking glass. Edith calms her fears and tells her "the signs of the times." "Virginia has seceded." Beverly enlists. "A Virginia woman does not even recognize an acquaintance among the enemies of Virginia."

Act II.—"I don' wan' no tarnished silber linin' to my cloud." "There are some things more precious than money, than jewels." "Death cannot conquer love—nor eternity." "Some day there will be no North, no South, but the Union." The Union scout falls a prey to Edith's fascinations and her cleverness wins the coveted dispatch. Virginia opens the door—to Peyton. Beverly is discovered. Friendship proves stronger than duty.

Act III.—Three years work a great change. Peyton pleads in vain. George and Fanny "take de road to de lan' of happiness." "In our little circle the stars and bars are floating high." Virginia gives Peyton another rose and together they trace against the background of blue and gray "the golden thread of destiny."

Shadows

By MARY MONCURE PARKER.

Price, 15 Cents

Play of the South today and a dream of the past in 1 act; an interior scene; 3 males, 4 females. Time, 35 minutes. Characters: Prologue and the Awakening: Robert Ashton, Virginia's sweetheart. Aunt Geranium, an old colored mammy. Virginia Lee, a southern maid. The Dream: Gordon Sanford, a soldier in love with Alice. Harold Hale, the successful rival. Mrs. Horace Fairfax, a stern mother of long ago. Alice Fairfax, her dutiful daughter.

STORY OF THE PLAY.

Virginia Lee's mother insists upon her marriage with a rich suitor, who has agreed to restore their impoverished estate. Virginia has a sweetheart of her childhood days and hesitates in making a choice, but finally decides upon wealth instead of love. An old colored mammy, who has spent her life in the Lee household, understands the situation and tells Virginia of a similar episode in the life of Virginia's grandmother. Virginia in pondering over the incident and grieving over her own troubles, falls asleep. She dreams of the story just told and the dream folks appear and play their parts. Virginia awakens, the shadows flee and she comes to her senses and her lover.

The old colored mammy says: "Dis heah ole worl's jes' full of shadders. Fokes comes an' dey goes, ripens and drops like the fruit on de tree. Ole Mars is gone, old Mistis gone. De substance melts and fades away. Ain't nothing left but shadders."

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers

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Borrowed Luncheon, 20 min.	5	
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Cow that Kicked Chicago, 20 m.	3	2
Divided Attentions, 35 min.	1	4
Dude in a Cyclone, 20 min.	4	2
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First-Class Hotel, 20 min.	4	
For Love and Honor, 20 min.	2	1
Fudge and a Burglar, 15 min.	5	
Fun in Photo Gallery, 30 min.	6	10
Great Medical Dispensary, 30 m.	6	
Great Pumpkin-Case, 30 min.	12	
Hans Von Smash, 30 min.	4	3
I'm Not Meself at All, 25 min.	3	2
Initiating a Granger, 25 min.	8	
Irish Linen Peddler, 40 min.	3	3
Is the Editor In? 20 min.	4	2
Kansas Immigrants, 20 min.	5	1
Men Not Wanted, 30 min.	8	
Mike Donovan's Courtship, 15 m.	1	3
Mother Goose's Goslings, 30 m.	7	9
Mrs. Jenkins' Brilliant Idea, 35m.	8	
Mrs. Stubbins' Book Agent, 30 m.	3	2
My Wife's Relations, 1 hr.	4	6
Not a Man in the House, 40 m.	5	
Pair of Lunatics, 20 min.	1	1
Patsy O'Wang, 35 min.	4	3
Pat, the Apothecary, 35 min.	6	2
Persecuted Dutchman, 30 min.	6	3
Regular Fix, 35 min.	6	4
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Sing a Song of Seniors, 30 min.	7	
Taking Father's Place, 30 min.	5	3
Taming a Tiger, 30 min.	3	
That Rascal Pat, 30 min.	3	2
Those Red Envelopes, 25 min.	4	4
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Turn Him Out, 35 min.	3	2
Two Aunts and a Photo, 20 m.	4	
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Two Ghosts in White, 20 min.	8	
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	M.	F.
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Oh, Doctor! 30 min.	6	2
One Sweetheart for Two, 20 m.	2	
Oshkosh Next Week, 20 min.	4	
Oyster Stew, 10 min.	2	
Pete Yansen's Gurl's Moder, 10m.	1	
Pickles for Two, 15 min.	2	
Pooh Lah of Peacetown, 35 min.	2	2
Prof. Black's Funnygraph, 15 m.	6	
Sham Doctor, 10 min.	4	2
Si and I, 15 min.	1	
Special Sale, 15 min.	2	
Stage Struck Darry, 10 min.	2	1
Sunny Son of Italy, 15 min.	1	
Time Table, 20 min.	1	1
Tramp and the Actress, 20 min.	1	1
Troubled by Ghosts, 10 min.	4	
Troubles of Rozinski, 15 min.	1	
Two Jay Detectives, 15 min.	3	
Umbrella Mender, 15 min.	2	
Uncle Jeff, 25 min.	5	2
What Happened to Hannah, 15m.	1	1

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